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ARCHITECTURE'S CAPACITY TO CHALLENGE AND  
EXTEND THE LIMITS OF OTHER DISCIPLINES

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**Titulación de Arquitectura**

**ESCUELA POLITÉCNICA SUPERIOR Alicante University**

Carretera San Vicente del Raspeig s/n 03690 San Vicente del Raspeig. Alicante (SPAIN)

[eurau@ua.es](mailto:eurau@ua.es)

## Shuffle the framework

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TOC\_Centre's case history about retroactive collaborations and forms of critical pedagogies

**Sigillo, Bruna<sup>1</sup>; Nobile, Maria Luna<sup>2</sup>; Amore, Maria Pia<sup>3</sup>; Coppolino, Francesca<sup>4</sup>**

1. University of Naples Federico II, Department of Architecture, Naples, Italy, [bruna.sigillo@unina.it](mailto:bruna.sigillo@unina.it)

2. University of Naples Federico II, Department of Architecture, Naples, Italy, [marialuna.nobile@unina.it](mailto:marialuna.nobile@unina.it)

3. University of Naples Federico II, Department of Architecture, Naples, Italy, [mariapia.amore@unina.it](mailto:mariapia.amore@unina.it)

4. University of Naples Federico II, Department of Architecture, Naples, Italy, [francesca.coppolino@unina.it](mailto:francesca.coppolino@unina.it)

### Synopsis

Last autumn TOC-Centre opened its doors to forty students of Department of Architecture Federico II in Naples (DiARC) and launched an open call for an ambitious project: setting up the first edition of Shuffle Screening Festival in Copertino - Salento, South Italy - and spreading temporary “parasites” in different areas of this baroque city, in spaces with distinct urban and architectural vocations. The call translated its actions into two multidisciplinary workshops (winter and summer school) with the aims to allow students to experience new forms of knowledge and to implement the cultural usability of public space. Planned for the spring 2019 Shuffle Screening Festival will be a path of performative actions in public space able to connect design and moving images thanks to contributions of interdisciplinary and widespread team that involves artists, curators, designers, independent cultural associations, students and local community.

**Key words:** Critical pedagogies, serendipity, moving images, cultural usability, collaborative networks, public art.



## 1. Introduction

Today architecture education requires an approach closer and closer to the real experiences with an increasing contamination between different knowledges and languages (Fig. 1). A 'liquid'<sup>1</sup>, hybrid approach is necessary to meet and address the needs of our contemporary society. Therefore the role of architect is changing: that introduction "shuffles" different practices and roles in his professional and higher-educational establishments. The way to teach (and to learn consequently) must take into consideration the position that the architect is nowadays who manages complex processes and provides the key to imagine multifunctional landscapes, often deeply connected.



Figure 1.

## 2. A retroactive collaboration between disciplines: from teaching to "community engagement", from place to project (or vice versa)

It seemed important to our group to make this premise to introduce Shuffle Screening's<sup>2</sup> case history (Fig. 2). Shuffle Screening is an ongoing festival format for moving images in public space co-created by TOC-Centre in collaboration with LightCone (Paris), independent groups and collectives, no-profit associations, artists, schools, professors, PhD and students of the Department of Architecture Federico II in Naples (DiARC).

TOC - acronym of Tower Of Copertino - is a cultural centre for the production of contemporary arts, recently opened. The Clock Tower is located in Copertino (Salento, South Italy), a monument which is inaccessible since several years. One of the main goals of TOC is to renovate the first floor of the tower, transforming it in a venue for exhibitions, installations, artistic residencies, screenings, happening, workshops and a work place open. It is an open space for research and production activities, focusing especially on the topic of the perception of time and space, through moving images and time based arts. It is a place where researchers, artists, curators, designers, performers, students and the local community will interact, for the creation of cultural and artistic processes and - not last - to improve equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

<sup>1</sup> BAUMAN, Zygmunt, 2000. Liquid Modernity. 2002 [Modernità liquida], Roma-Bari: Laterza

<sup>2</sup> The workshop was conceived in parallel with the activities of the TOC cultural center project carried out within the framework of the Culturability competition financed by the Unipolis Foundation in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage

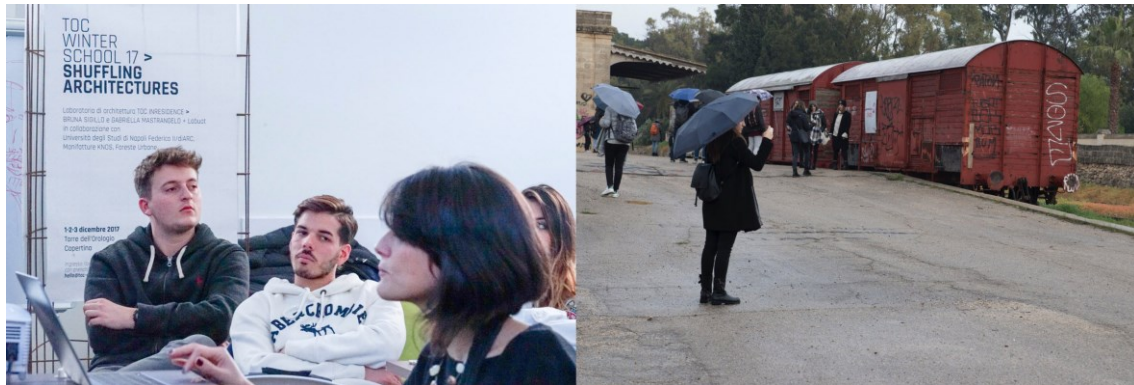


Figure 2.

In its philosophy TOC-centre's curatorial board is able to put together a wide range of interdisciplinary skills, practices, languages and project staff to create osmotic relationships and unusual combinations in the contexts of contemporary languages. TOC-centre also has an educational department with a specific program dedicated to training of researchers and designers, students and people with disability, to stimulate collaborative and co-creative practices inviting public to active participation. Among the goals, the use of contemporary languages to ethical and aesthetic reflection on them, contaminating processes and defining urgencies and possible future topics. The use of a non-formal education approach and innovative methodologies aim to the "community engagement" of different communities that live in this small town in South Italy. In TOC-centre's everything is cyclic, like Time.

### 3. The process > Design as time based art. The "parasites" for Shuffle Screening Festival

The collaboration between TOC-Centre and DiARC in Naples is based from a common aim: we tried to read design practice as time based art connected to visual and moving images languages. In this phase of our processe, we are linking the theme of parasite with contemporary art, landscape, biology and sound design issues thanks to contributions of interdisciplinary and widespread team. Last but not least, we are experience news forms for critical pedagogies and informal "school" to close the gap about contemporary culture.

In this way the co-creation group will create site specific ephemeral architectures, machines to "see", tools through which the audience can recognize spaces of the city and recognize himself in these spaces with a serendipity effect. We'll trasform the whole cultural program into a "long working and learning experience" for students, artists, and citizen involved to create Shuffle Screening Festival, planned for spring 2019. TOC-Centre's board with DiARC's group architects and students - supported by a large group of local partners<sup>3</sup> (Labuat collective, Foreste Urbane, Manifatture Knos, Giacche Verdi, Casello13,

<sup>3</sup> Labuat (Urban Laboratory Architecture Taranto) is a collective that promotes processes of citizen participation in the themes of the redevelopment and regeneration of the city and its public spaces; Foreste Urbane is an association which purpose is to promote and concretize the culture of ecological responsibility; Manifatture Knos is a place for participation and sharing ideas and projects in the fields of creativity and social innovation; Giacche Verdi, an environmentalist association and of civil protection, composed of volunteers; Casello13, a Coptino cultural association.

Municipality of Copertino and local entrepreneurs) - are already collaborating in this ambitious educational program that will include workshops, lectures, shows and public screenings to inform the audience and our community. The final displays will be the result of this co-creation process in which students, professors, curators, landscapers, people with disabilities, art lovers, visual artists and independents researchers are involved. In this osmotic environment we created, it is an advantage that we have many different models of thoughts so that learn from each other.

The research for a common strategy of intervention started at the end of November, last year, with a space related investigation. TOC-Centre organized a “winter school” in Copertino, comprising various phases:

1) research and build a general framework about ‘parasite in nature and architecture’, this the title of lecture by Gilles Clement<sup>4</sup>, organizing studio visit sessions to supports students ideas (Fig. 3).;

2) we had site inspection phase in Copertino, with the consequently reading of the urban structure and of the relationship between spaces and local communities;

3) design phase on project proposals with public presentations.

Actually our group is working to organize the summer school edition with new guests and international tutors to smooth out the projects before start the production.

Also the choice of “parasite design” was the outcome of a collective idea. From the reflection on the urban space our research has led to the proposition of a defined parasite design, a practice that proceeds through the introduction of new architectural bodies into pre-existing buildings and urban structures. Transposing the concept from the biology, in continuity with the thoughts of the French landscape, philosopher and keen gardener Gilles Clément, the architectural parasite is an organism separated from the host both formally and spatially, but linked to this by a state of necessity.

The “parasite” architecture is intended as an additive strategy. It’s a trigger mechanisms of adaptation and contamination. It’s a strategy for the employment of urban areas, which combines pre-existing structures with extensions or grafts. In the city this transmutation is translated into a new idea of relationship, which recalls the logic of symbiosis in biology, close to accumulation, collage, assemblage’s concepts.

The design experiments carried out during the winter school have adopted the parasite strategy to get into the urban design of the city of Copertino as a critical overlapping - in continuity or in contrast - of the existing spaces. This point of view become a yardstick of possibilities to weave interdisciplinary relationships with visual arts, sound design and urban spaces. This approach aims to transform - even if temporary - the perception of Copertino, grafting microarchitectures on the Clock Tower (TOC microvenue and studio artists), inside the main square to the railway station and ex industrial area of the city.

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<sup>4</sup> The Workshop has been part of the program of the “Incontri del Terzo Luogo” promoted by Manifatture KNOS in Lecce, where Gilles Clement gave a lecture to the students of the University Federico II.

Parasite microarchitectures, almost urban installations with the character of a playground, have been designed to implement the use of public spaces in order to generate sociality and interaction among its possible future users, people with disabilities included.



Figure 3.

#### 4. Open conclusions

The aim of this research reflects on the possibility of architecture to extend the limits of other disciplines from different point of view. We would like to point out on three main aspect of our work presented as an interdisciplinary collective independent group work:

- We believe that the co-creation process, in which different disciplines and people are involved (students, professors, curators, landscapers, people with disabilities, art lovers, visual artists and independents researchers), has to be considered as an osmotic exchange in which we can learn from each other starting from different backgrounds and different way of thinking, with the aim to build up a learning community. (methodology)
- We believe that the students engagement is a crucial part of our process and critical pedagogies method. In this context the relation between the topic of “parasite architecture” and the idea of the “third landscape” aim to re-think the architecture as a discipline, in line with the idea of a “planetary urbanization”. Reflecting on the conditions of the contemporary cities and on the uncontrolled urbanization, we need to be more conscious about the necessary change in direction, both in practice than in teaching and research activities. (research)
- We believe that the experience of the realization of the micro-architectures for the event in the places identified for the Shuffle Screening Festival, could generate a positive interactions between the community and the practitioners (students, curators, artists and technicians) involved, reconsidering the use of the public spaces as a physical and non-physical connection among its possible future users, people with disabilities included. (practice)

The conference will present the first micro-architectures and discuss the results achieved of the whole process: both methodology and first steps, and future development ideas in view of the final phase of the work that aim to realize these projects for the Shuffle Screening Festival.

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## Biography

**Bruna Sigillo.** Architect and PhD in Interior Architecture Philosophy. She is actually Adjunct Professor in Interior Design at the University Federico II in Naples. Her research topic is based on the analysis of shared spaces in different urban contexts, highlighting the gradual process of dissolution and virtualization in the imperative of connection, with special attention to the interiority and shared values of the human scale. Her main publications are on the topic of contemporary man who lives in a new dimension, the spaceless: isolated in his own bubble and at the same time logged on the world by preponderant web net. Winner of the public competition held by MiBACT "Youth for Culture", she joined at several academic researches, national and international design workshops and conferences. She currently conducts research on forms of critical academic pedagogies, learning by doing with students, thanks to the collaboration with cultural center like TOC and Manifatture Knos of Lecce.

**Maria Luna Nobile.** Architect, and Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Studies she is actually Adjunct Professor in Architectural and Urban Design at the University Federico II in Naples. Her research focuses on the design of the contemporary city, with special attention to the urban regeneration local policies, interdisciplinary and innovative practices especially focusing on the relation between urban development of the city and social issues in the era of climate change. As designer, she also takes part to public competitions on both small and large-scale. Her main publications are on the topic of the interdisciplinary approach of architecture dealing with the global changes.

**Maria Pia Amore.** Architect, graduated *summa cum laude* in 2014, she is a PhD candidate in Architectural and Urban Design at the Department of Architecture of University of Naples "Federico II". Her PhD research focuses on the relations between former psychiatric hospital and the contemporary city. Her wider research interests focuses on the design strategies of intervention, both at architectural and urban scale, on existing building and areas, considering the underused or abandoned built up spaces as a resource, and facing the modification/mutation as an instrument for reaching duration in a perspective of sustainable development. She is also interested on the communication of the architectural project. She joined at several academic researches, national and international design workshops and conferences. She is currently teaching assistant at Laboratory of Architectural and Urban design. As designer, she also takes part to public competitions on both small and large-scale.

**Francesca Coppolino.** Architect and PhD candidate in Architectural and Urban Design at the Department of Architecture DiARC of the University of Naples "Federico II". She graduated *summa cum laude* in 2015 at the University of Naples "Federico II". Her research interests focus on the relationship between architecture and ruins in contemporary city, on the interdisciplinary approach of architecture, especially regarding the relationship between architectural project and cinematographic techniques and also on the communication of the architectural project. As designer, she has participated to public competitions on both architectural and urban scale. Her main publications are on the topic of the contemporary architectural project into existing contexts. She is part of research groups at the University of Naples "Federico II". She has been tutor at Master courses and national and international workshops. She attended to many international conferences and exhibitions.